

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL  
ASSESSMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION OF SCHOOL  
PSYCHOLOGISTS IN WISCONSIN: A LITERATURE  
REVIEW AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS

by

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A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the  
Master of Education Degree  
With a Major in

School Psychology

Approved: 2 Semester Credits

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ABSTRACT

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The Relationship Between Psychoeducational Assessment and Job Satisfaction of School Psychologists in Wisconsin: A Literature Review and Critical Analysis  
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(Graduate Major)	(Research Advisor)	(Date)	(No. Pages)

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American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual – Fifth Edition  
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)

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This research project is a review and analysis of the literature regarding the roles and job satisfaction of school psychologists. The history of the role of school psychologists, the current role of school psychologists, the preferred role of school psychologists, and the perceived future role of school psychologists was reviewed. Also the literature about the importance of job satisfaction, in particular the relationship between school psychologists and job satisfaction was analyzed. The results of past research suggest that a primary activity for school psychologists is psychoeducational assessment, with this role accounting for approximately 50-55% of their time. However, according to the research school psychologists would prefer to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment activities. According to previous research, school psychologists in Wisconsin spend significantly more time in psychoeducational assessment activities (73.6%). The purpose of the proposed study is to evaluate whether or not school psychologists in Wisconsin continue to spend a significant percentage of time in psychoeducational assessment and if this impacts their level of job satisfaction.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to the completion of this paper. I would first and foremost like to thank Dr. Denise E. Maricle for her help, guidance, and support in writing this paper. Without her knowledge of research, suggestions, and encouragement this paper would not be possible.

I would also like to thank my parents, Robert and Donna Hofschild, for all of their love and encouragement, not only in writing this paper, but for supporting me, financially and otherwise, in my education.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Research Questions.....	4
Definition of Terms.....	4
Assumptions.....	5
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE.....	6
The History of the Role of the School Psychologist.....	6
The Current Role of the School Psychologist.....	8
The Preferred Role of the School Psychologist.....	11
The Perceived Future Role of the School Psychologist.....	13
Job Satisfaction.....	14
The Relationship Between the Role of the School Psychologist and Job Satisfaction.....	15
Prior Research Conducted on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ).....	17
Conclusion.....	19
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	21
Implications of the Current Literature for Future Research.....	21
Proposed Future Study.....	22
Participants.....	22
Survey Instrument.....	22
Data Collection.....	24
Data Analysis.....	24
Significance of the Research.....	24
Anticipated Findings.....	25
Potential Limitations of the Proposed Study.....	25
REFERENCES.....	27

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Job satisfaction is very important in determining an individual's intent to stay or leave a job. Lambert, Hogan, and Barton (2001) noted that job satisfaction has the largest direct effect on turnover intent. Turnover intent influences an individual's voluntary decision to leave a job position. Additionally, it has been determined that workers seem more satisfied with jobs that allow variety and do not involve repetitious acts (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Lambert et al., 2001). Given that previous research has indicated that job satisfaction is important in an individual's decision to stay at their job, one could speculate that a school psychologist's job satisfaction would be important in their decision to stay at their job. Additionally, it could be hypothesized that variables such as role, function, or repetitive activities would have a great impact on the job satisfaction of school psychologists.

Fagan (2000; 2002b) identified four primary roles performed by school psychologists in the schools. The first and most primary role is the sorter, which consists of performing psychoeducational assessments to determine the placement of children in special education. The second role is the repairer, which includes time spent in individual and group interventions, academic remediation, and individual and group counseling. Traditionally, most of the school psychologist's time has been spent in these two roles. The third role is consultation, which is meeting professionals to focus on work-related problems. The fourth role is that of the engineer, which involves school psychologists using their skills at a systems level.

Nastasi, Varjas, Berstein, and Pluymert (1998) report that in the field of school psychology, practitioners spend the majority of their time conducting psychoeducational assessments. Reports vary as to the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment activities. Reschly and Wilson (1995) stated that school psychologists spend approximately 50% to 55% of their time in psychoeducational assessments, dividing the remainder of their time in direct interventions (20%), problem-solving consultation (16%), and organizational-systems consultation and research evaluation (5%). School psychologists reported that they would prefer spending less time in psychoeducational assessments so they could have more time to spend in the other activities. A study by Wilson and Reschly (1995) found a discrepancy between the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessments and the amount of time that they would prefer to spend in psychoeducational assessments.

Research has also been conducted on the current role of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Hartnett (1989) found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent an average of 29.2% of their time in testing, 14.1% involved in multi-disciplinary team activities, 13.6% in the preparation of psychological reports, 13.2% in counseling, 9.1% in administrative duties, 8.8% in teacher consultation, 4% in observations, 3.9% in family contact, and 1% in giving inservices. When adding the percentages of activities that make up psychoeducational assessment, it appears that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend approximately 73.6% of their time in psychoeducational assessment activities. Ring (1989) also researched the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin and found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent the majority of their time administering tests (42.8%), followed by other activities such as multi-disciplinary teams, report writing,

staff meetings, and administration duties (32.41%). The remainder of time was spent in counseling (26.69%), and teaching (4.07%) (Ring, 1989). Comparing this data with the definition of psychoeducational assessment in this study, it can be estimated that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend between 42.8% and 75.21% of their time in psychoeducational assessment activities. When comparing these percentages to national percentages, it appears that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend more time in psychoeducational assessment than the average school psychologist.

Current research indicates that school psychologists are generally satisfied with school psychology as a career choice and the majority intends on staying in the school psychology profession (Reschly, 2000; Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Wilson & Reschly, 1995). However, limited data has been collected concerning the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Other studies have examined the job satisfaction of school psychologists with various other variables, such as gender and an urban or rural setting, although no studies have specifically looked at a possible relationship between the amount of time that a school psychologist spends in a particular role or activity and their job satisfaction (Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Wilson & Reschly, 1995). Given the fact that there is a discrepancy between the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment and their preferred amount of time to spend in psychoeducational assessment, it leads one to believe that there may be a correlation between the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment and their level of job satisfaction.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

The purpose of this study is to determine the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment by school psychologists in Wisconsin, their level of job satisfaction, and if there is a relationship between the time spent in psychoeducational assessment and the level of job satisfaction.

### ***Research Questions***

This research will address three questions. They are:

1. What is the percentage of time Wisconsin school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment?
2. How satisfied are school psychologists in Wisconsin with their jobs?
3. Is there a correlation between the amount of time that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in assessment and their level of job satisfaction?

### ***Definition of Terms***

For clarity of understanding, the following terms need to be defined.

*Job satisfaction* – the level an individual is satisfied with their job. For the purposes of this study, respondents answer on a 4-point Likert scale with one being very dissatisfied, two being dissatisfied, three being satisfied, and four being very satisfied. If a respondent answers with a score of 3 or higher they are defined as being satisfied with their job, and if they answer with a score below 3 they are defined as being dissatisfied with their job.

*Psychoeducational assessment* – refers to an evaluation for the diagnosis of handicapping conditions and includes the activities of testing, report writing, observations, examining school records, interviews with parents and teachers, and

participation in multi-disciplinary teams. For the purposes of this report, school psychologists that spend 50% or more of their time in psychoeducational assessment are defined as spending high amounts of time in psychoeducational assessment, and those school psychologists that report spending less than 50% of their time in psychoeducational assessment are defined as spending low amounts of time in psychoeducational assessment.

### ***Assumptions***

Based on previous research, it is assumed that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend more time than average in psychoeducational assessment activities. Additionally, it is assumed that the more time a school psychologist spends in psychoeducational assessment, the lower their job satisfaction will be.

## CHAPTER II

### Review of Relevant Literature

The following chapter will address many important themes, including the history of the role of the school psychologist, the current role of the school psychologist, the preferred role of the school psychologist, and the perceived future role of the school psychologist. Next, the importance of job satisfaction in work situations will be reviewed, followed by an examination of the relationship between the roles of the school psychologist and job satisfaction. Finally, the rationale for this study will be discussed and critically analyzed in relationship to the current literature.

#### ***The History of the Role of the School Psychologist***

The beginnings of school psychological services can be traced back to the social reform era in the late 1800's and early 1900's, which included the passage of compulsory schooling and child labor laws, the development of juvenile courts, mental health systems and vocational guidance, and the growth of institutions serving children (Fagan & Wise, 2000). When federal compulsory education laws were passed in 1852, the need for psychologists in the schools was created to assist with diagnosing and evaluating children for the determination of special education services (Pfeiffer & Reddy, 1998). Another event that occurred around this time that may have influenced the beginning role of school psychologists was the use of the Army Alpha and Beta tests during World War I to screen large numbers of army inductees (Fagan & Wise, 2000). The reason this may have influenced the role of school psychologists was that it exposed the public to the idea of using standardized tests as a screening device. Early school psychologists served students from external agencies, until the 1920's when school psychologists began

working in the schools themselves (Fagan, 2002b). In 1925 the role of a school psychologist was described as having six functions: selecting and interpreting tests in schools, diagnosing problem cases, developing therapeutic programs and conducting therapy, conducting research, contributing to the understanding of learning problems, and consulting with teachers (Jenkins, 2001).

In 1950 there was a rapid growth in the number of practicing school psychologists in part because of the post-World War II baby boom, which caused a growth in school attendance, and also because of the enactment of comprehensive special education laws which included mandatory psychological services (Fagan, 2002b). From 1940 to 1970 the number of practicing school psychologists grew from about 500 to 5000 (Fagan & Wise, 2000). These numbers kept rising with approximately 9,550 school psychologists employed in public schools in 1977-78 and 23,806 school psychologists employed in public school settings in 1996-97 (Reschly, 2000).

School psychology has been greatly influenced by legislation that guarantees children with disabilities access to appropriate educational services (Reschly, 2000). The enormous and continual growth of the field of school psychology since 1975 is highly correlated with mandatory special education legislation such as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975), which has been reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 (Reschly, 2000). This law mandated every school district to implement special education programs, including psychological services for all handicapped children (Fagan & Wise, 2000). Prior to the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (1975), training programs in school psychology encouraged their students to move beyond individual testing and into broader roles,

including consultation, parent training, and systematic intervention (Anderson, Hohenshil, & Brown, 1984). Subsequent to the passage of the Act and its various revisions, the role of the school psychologist became more assessment driven because of the need to identify students categorically qualify for special education. Recently, there has again been a push for school psychologists to move into broader roles, as is discussed in the section on the perceived future role of the school psychologist.

### ***The Current Role of the School Psychologist***

School psychologists perform many different roles in the schools. Fagan (2002b) identified four primary roles held by school psychologists. The first and most primary role is the sorter, which is using psychoeducational assessments to determine the placement of children in special education. The second role is the repairer, which includes time spent in individual and group interventions. This repairer role includes academic remediation and individual and group counseling. Traditionally, most of the school psychologists' time has been spent in these two roles. The third role is consultation, which is meeting professionals, often teachers, to focus on a work-related problems (Fagan, 2000). The types of consultation that school psychologists engage in include mental health consultation, behavioral consultation, crisis consultation, and organizational consultation (Fagan, 2000). The fourth role is that of the engineer, which is the extension of the consultation role to systems analysis, using their skills at a systems level, not at the individual level with students, parents or educators (Fagan, 2002b).

The most time-consuming of these roles is the sorter role, that is conducting psychoeducational assessments, which is primarily used to determine eligibility for special education services. Research by Hosp and Reschly (2002) suggests that school

psychologists currently spend anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of their time involved in special education eligibility determination. Psychoeducational assessment is fundamental to the role of the school psychologist because IDEA and state laws define criteria for disability eligibility for special education services in ways that mandate the use of individually administered tests of intellectual functioning (Wilson & Reschly, 1996). Other roles that do not include psychoeducational assessment for disability eligibility determination are secondary to the sorter role of the school psychologist in the United States today (Reschly, 2000).

Several variables impact on the amount of psychoeducational assessment conducted by a school psychologist. Hutton and Dubes (1992) reported that school psychologists with doctoral level training spend less time in psychoeducational assessment than school psychologists with either a master's or specialist degree. This may be because many school psychologists with doctoral level degrees work in universities training school psychology students. Also, research suggests that in schools where there is a greater student to practitioner ratio, school psychologists are more likely to do more yearly evaluations than in schools where there is a smaller student to practitioner ratio (Reschly, 2000; Jenkins, 2001). The assumption here is that the greater the number of students a school psychologist serves, more psychoeducational assessments would be required because this school psychologist would proportionately have more students to serve.

Reports vary as to the amount of time that school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment. According to a paper presented to the American Psychological Association in 1998, Reschly stated that in 1986, the amount of time spent

in special education eligibility evaluations was 68% (Reschly, 2000). In 1992, Hutton and Dubes reported that school psychologists spent an average of 62.7% of their time conducting psychoeducational assessments or in assessment related activities. Huebner (1993) found that school psychologists in secondary schools (grades 7-12) spent 36% of their time in psychoeducational assessment functions, 15% of their time in consultation, 13% in staffing, 12% in individual counseling, 2% in family counseling, and 0.5% in research. In 1995, Reschly and Wilson reported that school psychologists spent approximately 50% to 55% of their time in psychoeducational assessments. Fagan (2000) analyzed several studies and found that overall school psychologists spend approximately 52-55% of their time in psychoeducational assessment, 21-26% of their time in interventions (including counseling and remediation), 19-22% of their time in consultation, and 1-2% of their time in research and evaluation.

Research has also been conducted on the current role of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Hartnett (1989) found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spent an average of 29.2% of their time in testing, 14.1% in multi-disciplinary teams, 13.6% in the preparation of psychological reports, 13.2% in counseling, 9.1% in administrative duties, 8.8% in teacher consultation, 4% in observations, 3.9% in family contact, and 1% in giving inservices. For the purposes of this study, psychoeducational assessment is defined as including testing, report writing, observations, examining school records, interviews with parents and teachers, and participation in multi-disciplinary teams. This means that in the context of this definition approximately 73.6% of school psychologists' in Wisconsin time is spent in psychoeducational assessment. Ring (1989) also researched the current roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin. He found that school

psychologists in Wisconsin spent the majority of their time administering tests (42.8%), followed by other activities (32.41%) which included multi-disciplinary teams, report writing, staff meetings, and administration duties. The remainder of time for school psychologists in Wisconsin was spent in counseling (26.69%), and teaching (4.07%) (Ring, 1989). Comparing this data with the definition of psychoeducational assessment in this study, it can be estimated that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend between 42.8% and 75.21% of their time in psychoeducational assessment.

### ***The Preferred Role of the School Psychologist***

Levinson (1990) reported that almost 60% of their respondents spent more than 40% of their time in psychoeducational assessment, however only 30% indicated that they desired to spend this much time in psychoeducational assessment. Only 5% indicated that they spent more than 40% of their time in consultation, but 15% indicated that they desired to spend this much time in consultation. Also, only 5% of respondents spent more than 20% of their time in counseling, however 28% of respondents indicated that they would prefer to spend this amount of time in counseling activities. In the area of research, only 4% stated that they spent more than 5% of their time in research, yet 40% of respondents stated that they would prefer to spend more than 5% of their time devoted to research (Levinson, 1990).

Reschly and Wilson (1995) found that while school psychologists spend over half their time in psychoeducational assessments, the remainder of their time is divided among various other activities, such as direct interventions (20%), problem-solving consultation (16%), and organizational-systems consultation and research evaluation (5%). However, Reschly and Wilson (1995) reported that school psychologists would

prefer to spend 32% of their time in psychoeducational assessments, 28% in direct interventions, 23% in problem-solving consultation, 10% in organizational-systems consultation, and 7% in research evaluation. According to another survey conducted by Wilson and Reschly (1995), male and female school psychologists spent an average of 21.55 hours a week on psychoeducational assessment, compared to spending 12.82 hours per week on psychoeducational assessment that they would prefer to do. Roberts and Rust (1994) reported that school psychologists in Tennessee spent an average of 66% of their time in psychoeducational assessment, compared to 50% of their time that they would prefer to spend in psychoeducational assessment. Research in Iowa suggests that school psychologists there spend an average of 51% of their time in psychoeducational assessment, compared to the 46% of their time that they would prefer to spend in psychoeducational assessment (Roberts & Rust, 1994). Hosp and Reschly (2002) found that in every region of the United States, school psychologists reported that they would prefer to spend less time than they currently spend doing psychoeducational assessments and spend nearly equal parts of time in psychoeducational assessment, intervention, and consultation (12.8, 11.4, and 13.3 hours, respectively). However, in the regions that had higher rates of time spent in psychoeducational assessment, the preferred amount of time to spend in psychoeducational assessment was also higher than in regions that spent less time in psychoeducational assessment (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). These studies suggest that there is a discrepancy between school psychologists' amount of time spent in these roles and their preferred amount of time to spend in these roles.

Research has also been conducted on the preferred roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Hartnett (1989) surveyed school psychologists in Wisconsin by having

them rank the roles that held the most personal importance to them on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being “not of importance” to 5 being “extremely important.” The results were teacher consultation being ranked the highest at 4.1, followed by counseling (4.0), family contact (3.9), observation (3.5), testing (3.5), involvement in M-teams (3.4), report preparation (3.1), inservices (2.8), and administrative duties (2.3). Ring (1989) found that school psychologists in Wisconsin would prefer to spend 33.08% of their time administering tests, 26.94% of their time in other activities (multi-disciplinary teams, report writing, staff meetings, and administration), 30.68% of their time in counseling, and 9.27% of their time in teaching. In a study by Peterson (1999), school psychologists in Wisconsin were surveyed to assess the importance of three specific roles pertaining to school psychologists: consultation, counseling, and play therapy. It was found that school psychologists in Wisconsin reported that providing consultative services and possessing well-developed counseling skills are and will continue to be of significant importance; however, school psychologists in Wisconsin seldom utilized play therapy and did not see themselves as needing to use play therapy in the future.

### ***The Perceived Future Role of the School Psychologist***

It is hard to predict what the role of school psychologists will be in the future, however there are many ideas as to how the role of the school psychologist may change. A survey of special education administrators indicated a desire on their part for school psychologists to spend more time in counseling and consultation (Cheramie & Sutter, 1993). Pfeiffer and Reddy (1998) see the future key roles and functions for school psychologists as including resource development, indirect services, the use and coordination of community resources, applied research and program evaluation, and

direct service. Bradley-Johnson and Dean (2000) see the future role of the school psychologist as including more indirect services because they feel that there are too many children in need of services for school psychologists to work with them on a one-on-one basis. Instead they feel that school psychologists should attempt to change the behavior of individuals that work with these children daily by spending more time in consultation, research, and program development. Swerdlik and French (2000) see the role of the school psychologist as changing in the future with a greater emphasis in training programs linking psychoeducational assessment and intervention, in an attempt to make psychoeducational assessment more applicable. Reschly (2000) stated that school psychologists will continue to spend more than half of their time in psychoeducational assessment, but that psychoeducational assessment will change toward less standardized testing of intellectual abilities and more toward intervention-oriented assessment, greater involvement with direct interventions, and problem-solving consultation. Some examples of these types of psychoeducational assessment include putting more emphasis on behaviorally defined target behaviors, determining current status on relevant behaviors, and using data to assess intervention progress, as well as evaluating program effectiveness and the appropriateness of program placements (Reschly, 2000). Fagan (2002a) indicated that certain states are redefining psychoeducational assessment functions, however the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessments may not change.

### ***Job Satisfaction***

Job satisfaction is important in shaping an individual's intent to stay or leave a job and has the largest direct effect on turnover intent (Lambert, Hogan, & Barton, 2001).

The more dissatisfied employees are within their current position, the more likely they are to leave their job (Hellman, 1997). It has also been found that the work environment is essential in shaping job satisfaction (Lambert et al., 2001). An individual's work environment includes many variables, one of them being task variety, which is the degree of nonrepetitiousness in a job or the amount of variety that a person believes they have with their job. Workers appear more satisfied with jobs that allow them variety rather than repetition in their job (Johnson & Johnson, 2000; Lambert et al., 2001). Another variable that influences job satisfaction is role conflict, which is when inconsistent behaviors are expected from an individual; the higher an employee's role conflict the lower their job satisfaction (Billingsley & Cross, 1992).

### ***The Relationship Between the Role of the School Psychologist and Job Satisfaction***

Research suggests that school psychologists are positive in terms of overall satisfaction with school psychology as a career and their intent to continue in school psychology as a career (Anderson, Hohenshil, & Brown, 1984; Levinson, Fetchkan, & Hohenshil, 1988; Reschly, 2000; Reschly & Connolly, 1990; Wilson & Reschly, 1995). Anderson et al. (1984) found that 81% of respondents reported being satisfied in their jobs as school psychologists, 58% reported that they planned to remain in their current position, and 85% stated that they planned to remain in the profession of school psychology. Levinson et al. (1988) reported that 82% of school psychologists in Virginia reported being satisfied with their job, 67% planned to remain in their current position, and 88% reported that they planned to remain in the profession of school psychology.

There have been some studies that have examined the job satisfaction of school psychologists with various other variables. Levinson et al. (1988) found a slight positive

association between belonging to an organizational affiliation, such as the National Association for School Psychologists (NASP) and the job satisfaction of school psychologists. In a study that examined the job satisfaction of school psychologists in rural and urban settings, Reschly and Connolly (1990) found that school psychologists in both settings were equally and generally satisfied with their current positions and the vast majority intended to continue in a school psychology career. Williams and Williams (1990) found that positive appraisals of their work performance from colleagues, administrators, and clients resulted in school psychologists having higher levels of job satisfaction and self-perceived competence. In a study that surveyed school psychologists in secondary schools, Huebner (1993) found that their job satisfaction increased as the amount of time school psychologists spent in individual and family counseling increased and as the amount of time that they spent in psychoeducational assessment decreased. Another study examining gender differences in school psychologists, found no gender differences in job satisfaction and that both genders planned to remain in the profession for at least another seven years (Wilson & Reschly, 1995). Hosp and Reschly (2002) compared many different variables with job satisfaction of school psychologists. Even though school psychologists in all regions of the country had previously reported that they would like to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment, they reported being satisfied with their work duties (all regions greater than 3.5 on a 5-point scale) (Hosp & Reschly, 2002). One area of concern with job satisfaction for school psychologists is the perception that there are few opportunities for promotion or career advancement in the schools (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Reschly, 2000).

Dalhoff (1990) studied the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin, looking for a difference in job satisfaction by those school psychologists employed in a single district or by a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA). The results of this study showed that school psychologists employed by a single district experienced a greater degree of job satisfaction than school psychologists employed by a CESA; however, these results did not find a significant difference between the levels of job satisfaction.

Although there have been numerous studies examining the job satisfaction of school psychologists, the relationship between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and their level of job satisfaction has not been examined. This study will look at the relationship between job satisfaction and the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment for school psychologists in Wisconsin.

#### ***Prior Research Conducted on the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ)***

The author of this study would like to use the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ), as there have been numerous studies evaluating the job satisfaction of school psychologists that have used the MSQ or a revised form of the MSQ. The author is currently in the process of obtaining permission to use the MSQ. The MSQ measures 20 specific aspects of work: ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social service, social status, supervision – human relations, supervision – technical, variety and working conditions. Respondents are able to answer questions on a 5-point Likert scale as very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, and very satisfied. The MSQ measures

overall levels of job satisfaction, levels of satisfaction with specific aspects of work, and predictors of job satisfaction.

Anderson, Hohenshil, and Brown (1984) used an adapted form of the MSQ, which consisted of 100 items and eliminated the category of neutral, having respondents answer questions on a 4-point scale. They found that 12.29% of respondents were in the dissatisfied range, 80.67% were in the satisfied range, and 5.94% were in the very satisfied range. Of the 20 categories of the MSQ, only school system policies and practices and advancement opportunities were correlated with dissatisfaction. Levinson, Fetchkan, and Hohenshil (1988) also used a modified version of the MSQ. They modified 21 items in order to increase the face validity for school psychologists and also used a 4-point scale, omitting the neutral category. The results of this study showed that 0.37% of school psychologists are very dissatisfied, 15.36% are dissatisfied, 82.40% are satisfied, and 1.87% are very satisfied. Again, the only two categories that fell in the dissatisfied range were school system policies and practices, and advancement. Levinson (1990) suggests that school psychologists' dissatisfaction with school system policies and practices may reflect a limited ability to control, define, and diversify their role.

Levinson (1990) used the same modified version of the MSQ as used by Levinson et al. (1988) and found significant relationships between job satisfaction and the actual time spent in consultation, research, clerical activities, and administrative activities. Significant relationships were also found between job satisfaction and the preferred time to spend in psychoeducational assessment, counseling, and research. Dalhoff (1990) also used the MSQ in his study to determine if there was a difference in job satisfaction between school psychologists in Wisconsin employed by a single district or employed by

a CESA. Dalhoff (1990) used the short form of the MSQ, which consists of 20 items and takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete. The short form of the MSQ measures intrinsic satisfaction, extrinsic satisfaction, and general satisfaction. Dalhoff's (1990) results indicated that although the job satisfaction for school psychologists in Wisconsin employed by a CESA was lower than those employed in a single district, the results were not significant. Because of the success of the MSQ in various other studies to measure the job satisfaction of school psychologists, it is the author's belief that it will be a valid instrument to use in this study.

### **Conclusion**

After reviewing the literature surrounding the roles of school psychologists, it is obvious that a significant amount of research has been done in this area. Many authors have written about the history of the role of school psychologists, the current role of school psychologists, the preferred role of school psychologists, and even the perceived future role of school psychologists. However, there is a problem in how the roles of school psychologists are defined in both the literature and various research studies. Different studies define the activities of school psychologists differently, for example they may have different activities included in the definition of psychoeducational assessment or even break up these activities separately, grouping several activities in one category. Also, in the research different studies describe the amount of time spent by school psychologists differently. Some describe time spent in terms of percentage of time, some in hours per week, and even others by explaining that a certain percentage of school psychologists spend a certain percentage of time in each category. Because the definitions of the roles and the amount of time spent in these roles are not uniformly

defined, it is very hard to compare the data from all these studies. Additionally, many authors have also written about job satisfaction, and in particular, the job satisfaction of school psychologists. However, there has been no research that has been done on the specific relationship of the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin. This data could be used to explain what factors influence the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin. That is what this study will address.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

This chapter will examine the implications of past research as it applies to the purpose and significance of the proposed study. The chapter will outline the methodology of the proposed research study, including how subjects will be selected and a description of the instrument that will be used. Information relating to the data collection and data analysis will also be discussed. Finally any assumptions and limitations regarding the methodology of the proposed study will be examined.

#### **Implications of the Current Literature for Future Research**

There have been numerous studies conducted on the roles and levels of job satisfaction experienced by school psychologists. It has been stated in many of these previous studies that school psychologists would prefer to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment activities (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Levinson, 1990; Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Roberts & Rust 1994). Given the fact that there is a discrepancy between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment activities and the preferred amount to time to spend in such activities, it is possible that there is a correlation between the amount of time spent in psychoeducational assessment and job satisfaction. According to the research (Fagan, 2000; Hartnett, 1989), school psychologists in Wisconsin spent a large majority of their time in psychoeducational assessment activities (73.6%) relative to national samples (52-55%). The purpose of this proposed study is to examine the amount of time spent by Wisconsin school psychologists in psychoeducational assessment, their level of job satisfaction, and whether or not there is a relationship between the two variables.

Based upon the preceding discussion, the following research objectives are proposed:

1. What is the percentage of time Wisconsin school psychologists spend in psychoeducational assessment?
2. How satisfied are school psychologists in Wisconsin with their jobs?
3. Is there a correlation between the amount of time that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in assessment and their level of job satisfaction?

#### Proposed Future Study

##### ***Participants***

A list of school psychologists will be obtained from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, which maintains records on all certified school psychologists. After obtaining this list, 200 subjects will be randomly selected. An equal number of males and females will be selected, and if possible, an equal number of school psychologists representing rural and urban school districts will be selected.

##### ***Survey Instrument***

The instrument that will be used in this study will be an adaptation of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). The MSQ measures 20 specific aspects of work: ability utilization, achievement, activity, advancement, authority, company policies and practices, compensation, co-workers, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, security, social service, social status, supervision – human relations, supervision – technical, variety, and working conditions. Respondents are able to answer questions on a 5-point Likert scale as very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neutral, satisfied, and very satisfied. The MSQ measures overall levels of job satisfaction, levels

of satisfaction with specific aspects of work, and predictors of job satisfaction. Albright (1972) suggested that the MSQ has satisfactory reliability (internal reliability coefficients of .80 and higher) and also offered evidence of its construct, concurrent, and content validity. Additionally, Bolton (1986) concluded that the MSQ has satisfactory reliability and validity. Bolton noted that all 21 scales of the MSQ have reliability coefficients ranging from .78 to .93.

Several studies have used an adapted form of the MSQ in measuring the job satisfaction of school psychologists. This adapted form consists of 100 items and eliminated the category of neutral, having respondents answer questions on a 4-point Likert scale (Anderson, Hohenshil, & Brown, 1984; Levinson, Fetchkan, & Hohenshil, 1988; Levinson, 1990). Also, in the adapted form 21 items were modified, asking questions pertaining to the profession of school psychology, in order to increase the face validity for school psychologists. Because this is an adapted version of the MSQ, there is no information concerning the reliability and validity of the adapted form; however, one could conclude that it would be similar to the original MSQ. The author is currently seeking permission to use this instrument.

Along with using the adapted version of the MSQ, demographic information will also be collected. A separate form will question respondents about information such as age, sex, race, current degree status, number of schools served, psychologist-to-student ratio, annual salary, and number of years experience as a certified school psychologist. Respondents will also be asked if they plan to remain in their current position for five or more years, and if they plan on remaining in the profession of school psychology for five or more years.

### ***Data Collection***

Data will be collected by mailing a packet to selected participants. Each packet will include a cover letter describing the study, a consent form, the survey, and a self-addressed stamped envelope. The self-addressed stamped envelope will be enclosed to facilitate a higher return rate of the survey.

Confidentiality of respondents will be maintained by coding envelopes. When respondents return the survey, they will be crossed off the list. After a period of 2 weeks if the selected subjects have not responded, a second packet will be mailed to them. Once all data is collected, all identifying information of the subjects will be destroyed.

### ***Data Analysis***

Descriptive statistics will be used in analyzing the results of the data collected. For example, frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations will be used to describe the subjects' responses to the items in the survey. Also, correlative relationships between the demographic statistics, roles, and job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin will be explored.

### ***Significance of the Research***

This study is significant because there is a lack of current research dealing with the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin. Also, in the studies that have been conducted on the roles of school psychologists in Wisconsin, there is no uniform definitions concerning how the role of the school psychologist is broken into categories, or how the time of the school psychologist is quantified. In addition there is currently no research done comparing the specific relationship between the amount of time school psychologists in Wisconsin spend in the role of psychoeducational assessment and their

job satisfaction. The factors that influence the job satisfaction of school psychologists would not only be useful to school psychologists, but also their employers.

### ***Anticipated Findings***

Based on previous research, it is assumed that school psychologists prefer to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment (Hosp & Reschly, 2002; Levinson, 1990; Reschly & Wilson, 1995; Roberts & Rust 1994). Hartnett (1989) found that school psychologists in Wisconsin spend approximately 73.6% of their time in psychoeducational assessment. Fagan (2000) analyzed several studies and found that nationwide, school psychologists spend approximately 52-55% of their time in psychoeducational assessment. When comparing the national average (52-55% of the time in psychoeducational assessment) to the Wisconsin average (73.6% of the time spent in psychoeducational assessment), it can be assumed that the role of school psychologists in Wisconsin is more assessment driven. Therefore, because previous research suggests that school psychologists prefer to spend less time in psychoeducational assessment, it might be assumed that the job satisfaction of school psychologists in Wisconsin may be lower.

### ***Potential Limitations of the Proposed Study***

A major limitation of this research study is the limited sample. Since only school psychologists in Wisconsin will be sampled, the findings are not likely to be representative or generalizable to other states. A second limitation of the proposed study is related to the survey instrument chosen to measure job satisfaction. Because it is a modified form of the original instrument, reliability and validity may be an issue. Finally, a third limitation of the study might result from a poor response rate. Survey

research tends to be notorious for poor response rates. The survey will be conducted via the mail and although efforts will be taken to encourage a high response (return address stamped envelopes and follow-up questionnaires mailed to non-respondents), return rates in such situations tend to be rather low. A poor response rate could reduce the accuracy of the findings.

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